

Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee

Minutes of October 13, 2000

The NIH Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee met on October 13th from 9:00 to 10:30 am in the Gateway Building, Room 525. Ronald Abeles, the Chairperson (OBSSR) presided. Members and alternate members attending were: Fred Altman (NIMH), Judith Auerbach (OAR), Paula Skedsvold (OBSSR), Christine Bachrach (NICHD), Bob Weller (CSR), Linda Nebeling (NCI), Mike Oberdorfer (NEI), Cindy Friedman (FIC), Virginia Cain (OBSSR), Janice Phillips (NINR), Susan Stark (NIAMS), Mike Stefanek (NCI), Judith Cooper (NIDCD), Susan Persons (OBSSR), Charles Wells (NIEHS), Joy Boyer (NHGRI), Molly Oliveri (NIMH), Dan Berch (NIA), and Martina Vogel-Taylor (ODP). Guests attending were: Pat Kobor (APA), Angela Sharpe (COSSA) and Alan Kraut (APS).

Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Seminar Series

Ron Abeles announced the seminar series speakers for the next two months:

- Denise Park, Ph.D. from the University of Michigan will speak on "The Aging Mind" on October 19th from 9-10 am in the Natcher Conference Center, Balcony A.
- Amy Tsui, Ph.D. from the Carolina Population Center will lecture on "Population Trends and Family Planning in the Developing World" on Nov 9th from 9-10 am in the Natcher Conference Center, Balcony A.

Abeles mentioned that progress had been made on securing seminar speakers for next year, and the following scientists are tentatively scheduled to speak:

- Mary Carskadon (Brown University) and David Dinges (University of Pennsylvania) may present a symposium on "Sleep, Circadian Rhythms, and Cognitive Performance" on March 27th in the Neuroscience building.
- Jay Belsky (Penn State) and Sandra Hofferth (U of Michigan) may speak on "The NICHD Study of Early Child Care" on April 17th at 9 am in the Neuroscience building.
- Raynard Kington, the new OBSSR Director, is tentatively scheduled for June 2001.
- Daniel Kahneman is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 2001.

Also, three behavioral and social science presentations are scheduled within the NIH Director's Series. More information will be provided at a later date.

One scheduling conflict was noted: The conference, "The Science of the Placebo: Toward an Interdisciplinary Research Agenda" will be held Nov. 19-21, 2000, conflicting with the next BSSR-CC meeting on Nov. 21st.

Health Disparities Strategic Plan

Virginia Cain (OBSSR) asked CC representatives to review their IC's strategic plan on health disparities, identify the behavioral and social science components, and consider ways to collaborate, keeping in mind the likelihood of implementation by the ICs. At the next BSSR-CC meeting, IC representatives will have the opportunity to provide a 5-10 minute overview to examine areas of overlap and synergy. Handouts with URLs were encouraged. If additional time is needed, the discussion may continue at the December BSSR-CC meeting.

Methodological Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences

As follow up to the last BSSR-CC meeting in which members discussed the possibility of reissuing the PA on "Methodological Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences," Virginia Cain presented data for use in determining whether the initial PA was successful. The first table showed the number of applications received and funded for each Council round from Jan. 1999 to present. The number of applications was 27 immediately after the PA was issued in Feb. 1998, and has dropped off since that time (14 received for the October 2000 Council meetings). Cain said that she still receives calls on the PA - about 1 per month. Since the PA was issued, a total of 111 applications were received and 13 were funded.

The second table showed the total applications received, reviewed, and funded by IC. The IC's with the largest number of applications received are NIMH (26), NIA (20), NCI (19), and NICHD (18). Of this number, only four were funded. The third table showed the total applications received, reviewed, and funded by IRGs (Initial Review Groups). However, the IRG data did not permit assessing the reviews of methodology applications by individual study sections. Further analysis is needed to provide a clearer picture.

With the reorganization of the behavioral and social science study sections, five study sections were created in the SNEM IRG, including one on methodology. However, biostatistics was added to this study section. At present, biostatisticians dominate the study section because the bulk of the applications are in this area, and this could be hurting other types of methodological applications. Generating more behavioral/social science methodological applications would help, as would adding more behavioral/social science methodologists to SNEM.

There was interest among CC members in supporting work in this area. Advantages and disadvantages of the PA, RFA, and PAR were discussed. Relative to the PA and RFA, the PAR appears to offer more control, the study section can be geared to the specific needs of the announcement, and more than one Institute can participate. Although standing study sections are possible using the PAR, there may be a problem generating

and maintaining volume. One option is to have only one receipt date per year, but this may not be good for applicants. For example, NHGRI has experimented with one receipt date, and found that that this was not a problem with the initial submission, but was an issue with revisions. It was also suggested that methodological development could be looked at as exploratory, possibly funding proposals through a cooperative agreement. Other mechanisms (R03, K07) for support might also be explored.

ACTION: Given that the goal is to increase the number of applications in the area, CC members agreed that there is a need to reissue the announcement. Future discussions will focus on what mechanism should be used. In the interim, more data is needed, especially an analysis of funded applications by SNEM area. Once this is complete, these figures may need to be presented to CSR. Given the recent behavioral and social science review reorganization, there should be an opportunity for this type of monitoring and evaluation. Virginia Cain will send the new data to CC members and will also set up a group to review.

Information Exchange

CSR is starting a new study section in SNEM. For now, it will be a Special Emphasis Panel, but it will eventually become EDC3. Currently, the review loads for EDC1 and EDC2 are prohibitive. The panel/study section will review applications in the epidemiology of aging and musculoskeletal and respiratory illnesses.

The NIH's Fogarty International Center, with funding from the World Bank, will issue its RFA on health and international development on Nov 10 and 11.

There is a vacancy for a Scientific Review Administrator in CSR. Call Bob Weller for information.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NIH Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee will be held Nov. 21st from 2-4 pm, Building 31/Conference Room 10. This will be a joint meeting with the Prevention Research Coordinating Committee. CDC representatives will brief the CCs on the sociocultural aspects of their project "Guide to Community Preventive Services." The first hour will be devoted to the CDC briefing, and the second hour to a discussion of IC health disparities' plans.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paula Skedsvold
OBSSR

Attachment

RFA_PA_NUM	IC	TOTAL_APPS	FUNDED_APPS
PA98-031	AA	2	0
PA98-031	AG	20	0
PA98-031	CA	19	4
PA98-031	DA	6	1
PA98-031	DE	1	1
PA98-031	HD	18	2
PA98-031	HL	7	0
PA98-031	HS	3	1
PA98-031	MH	26	2
PA98-031	NR	9	2
		111	13

RFA_PA_NUM	COUNCI	TOTAL_APPS	FUNDED_APPS
PA98-031	199901	27	3
PA98-031	199905	17	4
PA98-031	199910	21	1
PA98-031	200001	10	3
PA98-031	200005	10	2
PA98-031	200010	14	0
PA98-031	200101	8	0
PA98-031	200105	4	0
		111	13

RFA_PA_NUM	IRG_CODE	GROUP CODE	TOTAL APPS	FUNDED APPS	
PA98-031	AARR		1	4	1
PA98-031	BBBP		1	7	0
PA98-031	BEM			3	0
PA98-031	BRB		1	1	1
PA98-031	CAPR			1	0
PA98-031	CPC			1	0
PA98-031	CPT			1	0
PA98-031	EDC			2	0
PA98-031	HBPR			2	0
PA98-031	HQER			3	1
PA98-031	HSRD		3	1	1
PA98-031	HUD			7	1
PA98-031	NCI			1	0
PA98-031	NIDA			2	0
PA98-031	NURS			9	2
PA98-031	PEC			1	0
PA98-031	RPHB		1	11	1
PA98-031	RPHB		2	1	0
PA98-031	SER			1	0
PA98-031	SGP			1	0
PA98-031	SNEM		1	33	2
PA98-031	SNEM		2	1	0
PA98-031	SRC		99	1	0
PA98-031	SRV		1	1	0
PA98-031	SSP			5	1
PA98-031	SSS		3	1	1

PA98-031	SSS	4	2	1
PA98-031	STA	1	5	0
PA98-031	VTs		2	0
			111	13